

Foes of the C.I.A., Not the Country

To the Editor:

Your July 21 editorial "Secrecy Is Not the Only Security" contains a number of inaccuracies and demonstrates a misunderstanding of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. As one of the targets of that proposed legislation, we feel compelled to reply.

For one thing, it is nothing short of scandalous for you to say that Philip Agee "goaded the Supreme Court into a decision that menaces the travel rights of all citizens." Agee did not revoke Alexander Haig's passport. You forget that Agee has never been charged with a criminal offense and was, in fact, the victim of calculated disinformation suggesting that he was going to go to Iran to "judge" the hostages, something he vehemently denied at the time. He has also not "named names" in years — since before the U.S. routinely issued him a new passport in 1978.

Had you limited your editorial to criticism of the proposed bill, we would have no quarrel; but you felt compelled, as so many others do, to utter obligatory denunciations of the Covert Action Information Bulletin, indicating a complete misunderstanding of who we are, what we do and why we do it.

You suggest that we are trying to "destroy vital intelligence functions." We are against (and would be delighted to destroy but have no illusions about our abilities) the secret manipulation of the affairs of other countries, the *raison d'être* of the C.I.A. This activity is not, to say the least, vital; it is probably responsible for more hatred of the U.S. around the world than any other single factor. The death and destruction attributed to the C.I.A. is staggering — in Chile, in Indonesia, in Vietnam, in Laos, in Guatemala, in Jamaica, etc.

You also continue to insist that we are "indifferent to the safety of the agents," something which we have denied in your pages before. Suffice it to reiterate that not a single person has been physically harmed on account of what we do.

We are glad that you recognize that

the bill's "protections" are no protection at all, but it is saddening that you do not realize that there is no bill, within the First Amendment, that will "get" us and not "get" you. Your call for "only the most tightly drawn identities bill" is a cry in the wilderness; there is no such thing.

ELLEN RAY

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